

SWIFT Center

State Education Agency Blueprint for Equity-based Inclusive Reform

Implementing, Sustaining, and Scaling Up SWIFT in States

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About SWIFT Center

Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) Center is a national K-8 technical assistance center that builds school capacity for equity-based inclusion. SWIFT defines ***equity-based inclusion*** as an educational system that values every student as a member of the neighborhood school and that has the infrastructure and practices in place to provide academic and behavioral supports to improve outcomes for all students, including those with the most extensive support needs (McCart, McSheehan, Sailor, Mitchiner, & Quirk, 2016).

SWIFT Center was launched in October 2012 as a five-year cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). OSEP is an active partner that assists, guides, coordinates, and participates in technical assistance activities. SWIFT's current scope of work is with State Education Agencies (SEAs), districts, and schools in Maryland, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Oregon, and Vermont.

The SWIFT framework (Figure 1) is a model for equity-based inclusion—not a brand. [SWIFT Field Guide](https://guide.swiftschools.org) (guide.swiftschools.org) provides an overview of the Domains and Features of the framework and in-depth content and resources for both learning and teaching others about SWIFT.

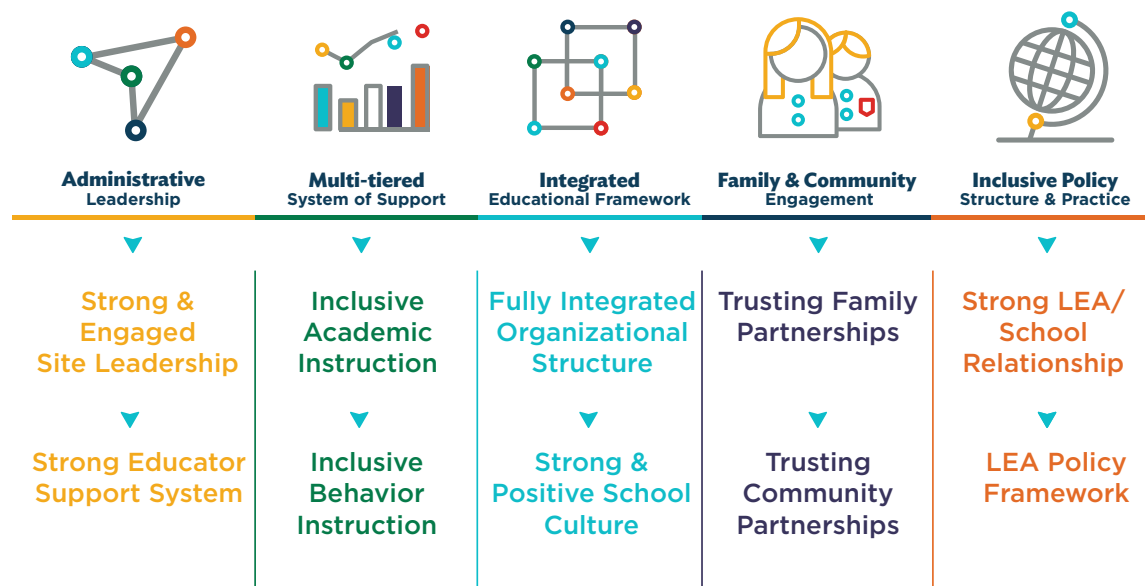


Figure 1. SWIFT Domains and Features

About SWIFT Technical Assistance

SWIFT TA is an implementation process. SWIFT TA supports states, districts, and schools as they become excellent and equitable teaching and learning environments for all students. Each school, with support from district and state partners, begins this process from its own starting point and travels its own path to create and sustain fully integrated learning environments. SWIFT differentiates its technical assistance using six evidence-based practices. These practices (Figure 2) are Visioning, Data Snapshots, Priority and Practice Planning, Resource Mapping and Matching, Transformation Teaming, and Coaching and Facilitation.

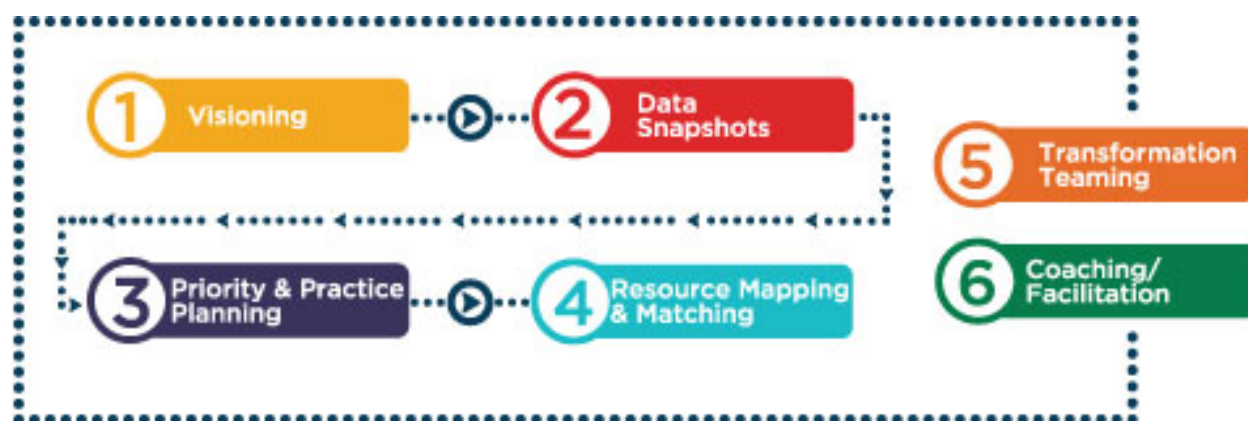


Figure 2. SWIFT Technical Assistance Practices

SWIFT Differentiated Technical Assistance white paper (McCart et al., 2016) provides information defining each of these practices. States partnering with the SWIFT Center are encouraged to embed these transformational practices and structures in their own state, district, and school level infrastructure. [SWIFT TA Playbook](https://swiftschools.org/playbook) (swiftschools.org/playbook) is a collection of guides and tools that state, district, and school partners can use to learn about, facilitate, and coach others as they lead the transformation of whole educational systems using the six TA practices.

Visit the [SWIFT Center website \(swiftschools.org\)](https://swiftschools.org), for more information about the research underpinning the SWIFT Domains and Features and additional resources for technical assistance and dissemination.

About This Blueprint

Architects use blueprints to map the construction of buildings, and they do so in conjunction and collaboration with those who have commissioned their expertise. Likewise, we offer this “blueprint” for our collaboration with SEA personnel who provide the technical support for SWIFT implementation, sustainability, and scale-up in their states. The blueprint provides an overview of the TA practices and collaborative learning structures that support SEAs in whole system implementation of SWIFT Domains and Features, and in the development of state-level infrastructure hospitable to sustaining the supports needed to deliver equity-based inclusive education.

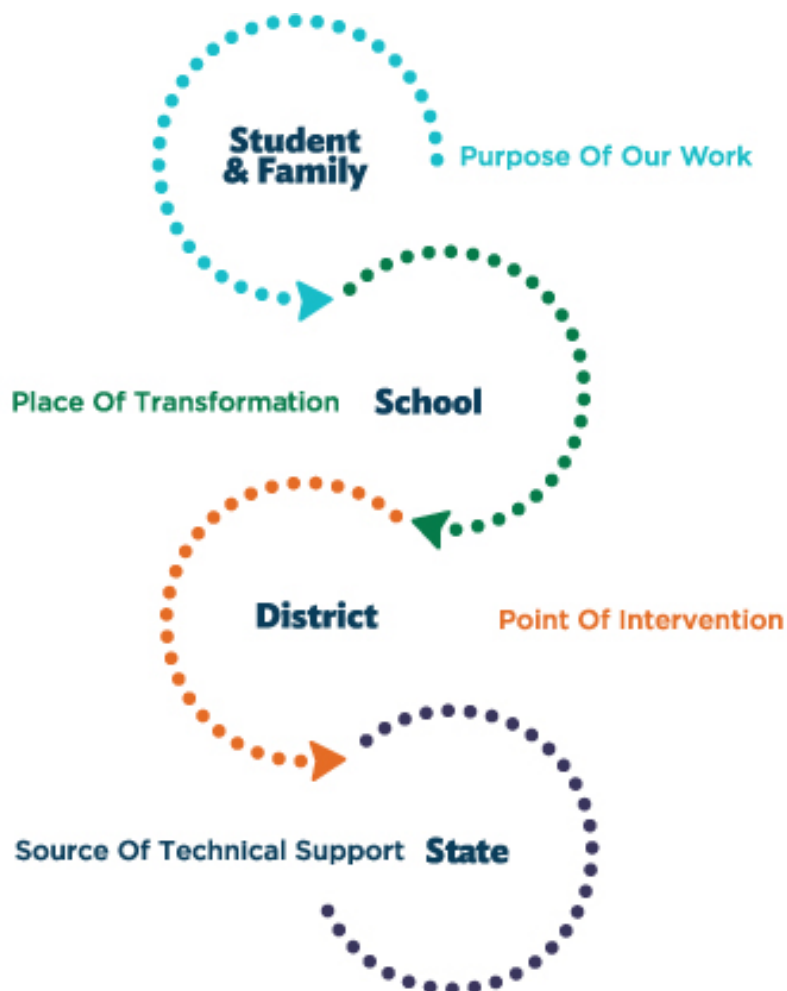


Figure 3. Whole system engagement across levels of influence

SWIFT TA intentionally partners with leaders across the education system—SEA, district¹, and school—in the implementation process. This cross-system, interdependent set of relationships is essential for building the collective capability of the whole system to achieve the core purpose of equity-based inclusion. The work of ensuring that each and every child has equitable access to the high-quality academic, behavioral, and social supports needed to be successful at school and in life requires SEAs to continually innovate throughout the system—it is a “mountain with no top.” Figure 3 depicts the cross-system relationship and levels of influence.

Guiding Premises

Three premises underpin this blueprint. They serve as the basis for creating shared purpose and direction for the SEA and SWIFT partnership.

1. The SEA has a visible commitment to inclusive educational reform and the sustainable achievement of positive academic, behavioral, and social outcomes for all children, including those with the most extensive support needs.
2. Multiple inclusive educational reform building blocks already exist within the SEA. Understanding and building upon these current system strengths honors what has come before and provides a positive foundation for innovating to achieve desired results.
3. The SEA values working in an authentic partnership with all system members—districts, schools, and stakeholders—to “co-create” the capacity to implement, sustain, and scale up SWIFT Domains and Features.

Allison Metz, researcher at the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), defines this last premise further:

¹ District is used interchangeably with Local Educational Agency (LEA) throughout this document and is defined as the geographical unit for administration of schools. Similarly, roles such as a District Coordinator or District Facilitator may be referred to as an LEA Coordinator or LEA Facilitator, respectively. Some states have intermediary or regional units between districts and the SEA that are involved in the practices we describe. States may adapt use of this blueprint to align with their structures.

Co-creative capacity involves the joining of scientific resources, governance capability, and adaptive leadership at multiple and whole system levels to create the infrastructure and conditions needed for the sustainable use of evidence. (Metz, 2015, p. 1)

The concept of *co-creating whole system capacity* for SWIFT implementation is the overarching umbrella under which this blueprint content rests. Following from Metz’s definition above, *capacity* is used in this blueprint to refer to both: (a) the skills, competencies, and knowledge required to implement SWIFT Domains and Features; and (b) the expert leadership for change at all system levels for SWIFT sustainability and scale-up (Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

SWIFT implementation necessitates educational leaders who can effectively bring together stakeholders across traditionally structured departments and/or divisions to collaborate in creating *one whole and cohesive education system*. Such individuals consciously lead people in a transformation process by strategically convening the right people to have the right conversations across the system.

Research shows that “siloeed,” non-cooperative or unaligned structures, workscopes, or activities within SEAs, districts, and schools can inhibit progress in the successful implementation of evidence-based practices that enable educational equity and excellence for all students (Sailor & McCart, 2004). Well-known by-products of siloeed systems include: initiative fatigue, policies that solve one problem at a time, confusion on the part of stakeholders throughout the educational system, and a loss of hope as a result of being pulled in multiple directions without realizing desired outcomes for children and families (Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

As an example, siloeed systems for general and special education can interfere with implementing the SWIFT Domains of Integrated Educational Framework (IEF) and Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). Both IEF and MTSS are well-backed by research as effective ways to achieve educational equity for all students (SWIFT Center, 2015). Equity-based inclusion requires that educational organizations be designed to enable all educators to work seamlessly together in learning communities and effectively use their

collective expertise to develop and deliver supports based on assessments of students' needs—needs as determined by data, not categories or labels. As such, SWIFT requires a whole system, de-siloed approach to transformation.

As a precursor to the blueprint, in the next section we offer a glimpse of what success could look like in a state's collaboration with SWIFT Center.

Standing in the Future

Imagine this:

Four years have passed since the SEA began its partnership with SWIFT Center. Today the SEA communicates to educators, families, and the public at large a coherent, statewide vision of educational equity and excellence for every student, including those with the most extensive support needs. The SEA has transitioned from its former primary role of compliance monitoring to being a major provider and coordinator of differentiated technical support to districts and schools in implementing the domains and features of SWIFT. SEA technical assistance providers work collaboratively across divisions in doing this work, sharing technical assistance practices and approaches.

The SEA is fostering a learning culture across schools, districts, and the state. In doing so, the SEA built a strong, positive, and trusting foundation of relationships with its local partners. SEA Leadership and Implementation Teams design and hold multiple forums throughout the year for District and School Teams and stakeholders to reflect on qualitative and quantitative data gathered during SWIFT implementation.

Data include:

- Fidelity of implementation scores for SWIFT Domains and Features
- Student experiences (placement and culture data)
- Student outcomes (academic and behavior)
- District and state capacity assessment results
- Progress indicators for the established priorities

They celebrate successes, identify where further support and infrastructure development is needed, and innovate accordingly across the system.

Leaders at all levels are engaged in a continuous action-inquiry cycle. SEA leaders routinely select capacity-building priorities for SWIFT

implementation and then refer to a resource leveraging map (RLM) as they develop their action plans. The RLM is a “live” tool that displays local, state, regional, and national resources the SEA can tap or explore to assist in reaching their priority goals. For instance, the SEA recently secured philanthropic resources to accomplish their priority goal for expanded parent and family engagement in local school governance throughout the state.

The unifying theme throughout the SEA and SWIFT partnership is the development of one system of educational stakeholders working from a shared vision, purpose, and direction. They are working shoulder to shoulder to create educational environments that make equity-based inclusion a reality for all students in all schools.

Blueprint Organization and Timeline

This document describes major activities across a four-year implementation timeframe. Highlighted in Table 1 and described in subsequent sections are the collaborative learning structures and TA practices essential to SWIFT implementation. They are organized under three headings:

- Building the Foundation for Equity-based Inclusive Education
- Learning Together, Innovating Together
- Scaling Up SWIFT Across the System

SWIFT Center provides differentiated TA that supports SEA personnel in establishing and building on the blueprint architecture, noted below, in coherence with the needs and context specific to the state or region.

Table 1
Collaborative Learning Structures and TA Practices for Co-Creating Whole System Capacity for SWIFT Implementation

Collaborative Learning Structure or TA Practice	Timeframe (shaded)				
	Pre	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Building the Foundation for Equity-based Inclusive Education					
Establishing shared purpose and direction					
Coaching and Facilitation					
Transformation Teaming					
Learning Together, Innovating Together					
SWIFT State Launch					
Visioning					
Professional Learning Institute (PLI)					
National Leadership Consortium (NLC)					
State Data Snapshots / Priority & Practice Planning					
Resource Leverage Mapping (RLM)					
Communicating Positive Outcomes					
Scaling Up SWIFT Across the System					
Assessing State Readiness					
Planning for Scale Up					
Expanding Circles of Stakeholder Engagement					
Sustaining Change Using Practice-Policy Communication Cycles					

Building the Foundation for Equity-Based Inclusive Education

State and district administrators are frequently overtaxed in time and effort, and generally mid-stream in their current innovation efforts when they explore the possibility of partnering with SWIFT Center. Due to these conditions, SWIFT TA providers strive to work with SEAs in the SWIFT implementation process in ways that are efficient and leverage their current resources or structures for capacity building—not duplicate efforts or create non-essential tasks. A focused dialogue at the outset of the partnership supports that intention. SWIFT TA providers meet with state and district leaders for an initial conversation designed to build a foundation for effective future collaboration. The following paragraphs and sections expand on this conversation.

A significant part of the focused dialogue is directed to the transformational establishment of equity-based inclusive education. This concept is quite different from the more common set of practices identified with the concept of “full inclusion.” Full inclusion is a placement-based approach. It is concerned with the movement of students identified for special education from a segregated (disability-only) classroom or school, to placement in a general education classroom, often with the assistance of a paraprofessional. Available evidence from research does not support placement-based definitions of inclusion. For students requiring specialized supports and services, more is required than simple proximity to peers.

Equity-based inclusive education is a broader concept that applies to all marginalized populations of students in educational settings. Using MTSS as the principal driver, this approach to inclusion identifies an instructional match between measured need for extraordinary support on the part of the student and available resources, regardless of the source. In this sense, inclusion applies to all students (i.e., “all means all”). It is “equitable” because it applies available resources on the basis of measured and monitored need to all students and segregates none. The general education classroom in a school is but one integrated setting that lends itself to instruction. Other grouping possibilities exist on a schoolwide basis in accordance with a complicated, but highly functional master schedule. A schoolwide application of equity-based inclusive education has no need for segregated classrooms (or schools) and includes all student subgroups, such as “gifted,” English learners, and “severe

disabilities,” to name a few. This approach recognizes that problems of learning are not a property of individual characteristics but are rather a property of the interactions between the student and the learning environment. Hence, the paradigm shifts to “include” available resources to support students in general education instead of simply changing the placement of students.

Establishing Shared Purpose and Direction

Every organization or system is perfectly structured for the results it achieves. Thus, for an SEA to achieve equity-based inclusive education aims, a commitment must exist to develop infrastructures, policies, and practices that foster a statewide environment hospitable to SWIFT Domains and Features. SWIFT TA is designed to support states in the transformation to such a structure with the expectation that state, district, and school leadership teams and SWIFT TA providers are *mutually responsible for implementation success*.

Clarity around the shared purpose, direction, and respective roles of the partnership is essential to the collaborative work of transformation. To ensure a common commitment is established, SWIFT TA starts by exploring certain topics with SEA leaders, such as:

- Current SEA vision, strategies, and goals that are aligned with SWIFT
- SWIFT as an organizing framework for achieving equity-based inclusion
- Roles and responsibilities of key SEA partners and SWIFT TA providers
- Data management and accountability systems to enable stakeholders to measure SWIFT successes and innovate to achieve results in schools, districts, and statewide
- Resource Leveraging Mapping to support SWIFT implementation
- Policies that facilitate or inhibit SWIFT implementation
- A whole system approach to transformation
- District participation selection process and criteria
- Use of SWIFT TA practices

Data Use Agreement

An outcome of the initial dialogue is a data use agreement between the SEA and SWIFT Center. The agreement details what each partner will do based on a shared commitment to accountability for implementation success. The agreement may specify how useable data will be made available to SWIFT TA

providers, as well as State, District, and School Teams. Such data sharing agreements support the TA partnership to assess the results of implementation efforts across the system, name successes, and innovate for future change. These data are core to building capacity.

Initiating SWIFT TA Practices

Also at the outset, SWIFT TA providers share the SWIFT TA practices for bringing about whole system transformation and building collective capacity for scale up and sustainability (McCart et al., 2016). The six TA practices are used system-wide, but differ in form across state, district, and school levels. The TA practices of Coaching and Facilitation and Transformation Teaming are essential to address when creating shared purpose and direction for and SEA-SWIFT partnership. These two practices are detailed below. The other TA practices, as they are manifest at the state level, are addressed in later sections of the blueprint.

Coaching and Facilitation

Fundamental to the success of a SWIFT transformation is authentic partnership between the SEA, districts, schools, and stakeholders. SWIFT utilizes coaching and facilitation techniques to develop the necessary trusting working relationship among these system partners, and to build ongoing system capacity to support transformation. Coaching and facilitation take place in a mirroring arrangement from state to district and district to school.

Specifically, a SWIFT TA provider referred to as an SEA Facilitator serves as point person for facilitation and communication with SEA personnel. The SEA Facilitator models collaborative team practices, facilitates state meetings with and provides support to an SEA staff person, typically called an SEA Coordinator. Additionally, the SEA Facilitator works closely with State Teams (described later) and supports the work of another SWIFT TA provider known as an LEA Facilitator.

SWIFT's LEA Facilitator holds primary responsibility for supporting SWIFT implementation in districts and schools by supporting the work of LEA Coordinators, School Principals, and SWIFT School Coaches. LEA Facilitators model SWIFT's TA practices in districts and schools while providing coaching

and facilitation support for SEA and LEA Coordinator(s), who, in time, assume the coaching and facilitation roles.

Part of the memorandum of understanding between an SEA and SWIFT Center is the designation of one or more individuals to serve as a SWIFT SEA Coordinator(s). The intent of the SEA Coordinator-Facilitator relationship is to build the capacity of the SEA to assume core responsibility for the TA functions associated with SWIFT implementation, sustainability, and scale up after SWIFT Center concludes its formal TA arrangement with the state. As they develop independent skills, SEA Coordinators model and provide coaching and facilitation across all levels of the system, as needed.

A mirror arrangement also exists in each SWIFT partner district. Each district designates one or possibly two LEA Coordinators, depending on the number of schools involved in the transformation process. These LEA Coordinators assume responsibility for overseeing SWIFT implementation within the district and support School Principals and SWIFT School Coaches. A SWIFT School Coach supports the people, processes, and systems changes needed to implement SWIFT in their local context.

Parallel working relationships exist among SWIFT SEA and LEA Facilitators, in tandem with SEA Coordinators, as they collaborate to build SEA capacity to be a source of technical support for districts. When ready, SEA Coordinators mirror SWIFT Facilitators as they practice coaching and facilitation with LEA Coordinators. At this point SWIFT Facilitators shift to observing and providing feedback. Meanwhile, LEA Coordinators mirror the SEA Coordinators' earlier role to observe and build capacity to support School Principals and Coaches. This coaching and facilitation practice, mirrored across the system, allows for external TA support to fade and ultimately cease.

Transformation Teaming

SEA and LEA Facilitators, SEA Coordinators, LEA Coordinators, and School Principals and Coaches do not do the work of transformation alone. They form and work with various teams. These teaming practices are both effective for implementation and building capacity to sustain the new practices throughout the educational system. Each team is responsible for

supporting implementation of evidence-based inclusive educational practices in their sphere of influence. They also contribute to implementation work at other levels through multiple collaborative learning structures. Figure 4 represents a typical organizational structure and relationships among SWIFT teams. Detailed description of participants, roles, and responsibilities follow.

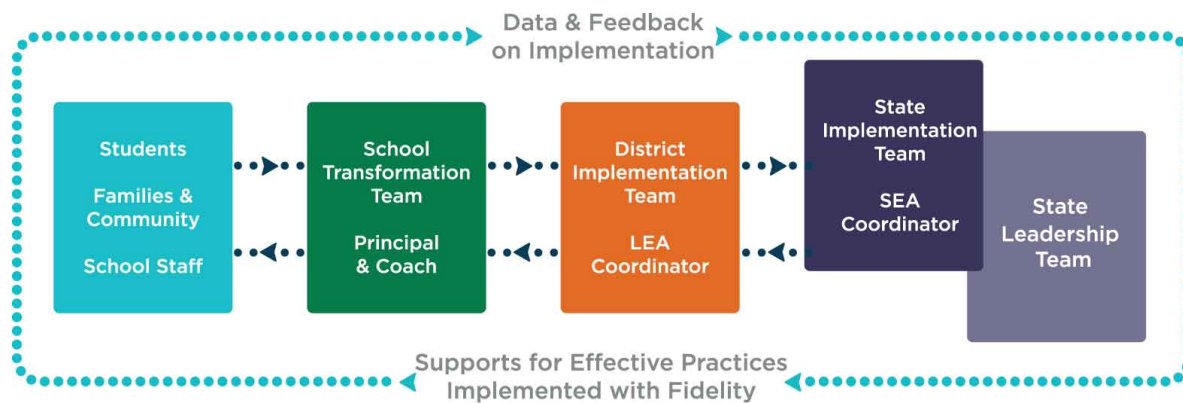


Figure 4. Organizational structure and relationships among SWIFT Teams

SWIFT recognizes that its partners may already have teams who provide leadership for the SEA, district, or school who can assume responsibility for SWIFT implementation, sustainability, and scale-up as part of their overall strategic performance management plan.² An exploration of the relationship between current teams and their work scopes at SWIFT partner sites and the work they engage in to implement the evidence-based practices of SWIFT Domains and Features is necessarily a part of foundational conversations.

Across SWIFT’s current state partners, variability exists in the role composition of teams and their meeting frequency. Such local decisions are expected in the SWIFT transformation process. However, recommendations for each team’s purpose, membership, and meeting frequency, based on both research and experience, are briefly described here.

² Performance management is defined here as the performance indicators, data sources, baseline data, and targets that teams use for each goal and set of strategies for achieving positive outcomes for students and their families at state, district, and school levels.

State Leadership Team

The overarching purpose of the State Leadership Team is to engage in dialogue and decision making that contributes to building statewide capacity for implementation, sustainability, and scale up of the SWIFT framework.

In State Leadership Team meetings, state and local leaders and stakeholders create shared understanding of equity-based inclusive educational reform. Based on that understanding, they work to achieve *whole system coherence and coordination* between SWIFT implementation in districts and schools and other transformative work in which an SEA is actively engaged. Using data collected through SWIFT assessments and tools, as well as other data gleaned from an SEA's routine assessments and reports, they develop priorities for their work. Anticipated outcomes of these meetings are actionable pathways for creating the state infrastructure and conditions needed to facilitate equity-based inclusion in districts and schools.

The frequency of State Leadership Team meetings is expected to be at least twice per year. Generally, in Years 1 and 2, State Leadership Team meetings focus on three planning stages for creating state capacity to ensure resiliency of positive outcomes in districts and schools. SWIFT TA refers to these stages as Laying the Foundation, Installing, and Implementing (described later). In Years 3 and 4, the State Leadership Team continues this work and also broadens its activities to capacity building aimed at sustaining district/school successes, and to scaling up those successes in additional districts and schools within the state.

Recommended team membership includes: State Education Leader (e.g., Superintendent and/or Assistant Superintendent), Curriculum/Instruction lead administrator, State Director for Special Education, Title I lead administrator, SWIFT State Implementation Team members, SEA Coordinators, LEA Coordinators, School Coaches, leaders of work related to implementation of SWIFT framework not already represented (e.g., Human Resources, Performance Management/Data, Finance, Early Childhood), and essential stakeholders (e.g., Family and Community, Mental Health, Higher Education, Professional Associations, Legislators, Unions).

State Implementation Team

The State Implementation Team is critical to coordinating and aligning SWIFT implementation and other bodies of work in which a state is engaged. State Implementation Team members are integral members of the SWIFT State Leadership Team. They are the people who take a “hands on” role in connecting the dots across the system and the building of a state’s capacity to be the source of technical support that meets the needs of districts and schools.

Between State Leadership Team meetings, State Implementation Team members serve as a major conduit to a state’s top-level leaders and other system stakeholders regarding local SWIFT implementation progress, successes, and capacity building needs. The role of State Implementation Team members in communicating shared messages about their SWIFT implementation work is fundamental to creating whole system coherence for inclusive educational reform.

In the Laying the Foundation stage, a State Implementation Team engages in a dynamic process to support implementation of SWIFT technical assistance practices, with fidelity to the SWIFT framework, in districts and schools. Initial state engagement is essential to this process, and includes such facilitated events as Visioning, Empowerment Evaluation, or State Capacity Assessment (described later).

State Implementation Team members are responsible for aligning current state initiatives to create whole system coherence of reform efforts (e.g., Title I, Title IIA). The team members are key informants during mapping and leveraging of local, state, regional, and national resources to support SWIFT implementation. State Implementation Team members also contribute to the differentiated TA to support District Implementation and School Transformation Teams. This team is integral to developing plans to communicate SWIFT implementation progress across the system and disseminate SWIFT Center resources for equity-based inclusive education.

The State Implementation Team plays a major role in designing and implementing such collaborative learning forums as a SWIFT State Launch and Professional Learning Institute(s). This active role allows team members

to be responsive to the data emerging from local implementation efforts about what TA, infrastructure support, policy analysis and alignment, and other actions are needed from the SEA to achieve and sustain SWIFT transformation in current sites and scale up to others.

Recommended team membership includes one or more state leaders with decision-making authority (e.g., Assistant Superintendent), SEA Coordinator, Representatives of critical reform efforts or bodies of work within the state (e.g., Title I, Title IIA, Title III, Special Education, MTSS, PBIS, Educator Effectiveness, State Personnel Preparation or Development Grants), Family and Community representatives, Higher Education/personnel preparation representative(s), and LEA Coordinators.

Ad-hoc State Teams for SWIFT Implementation Support

As SEAs explore the alignment of their current initiatives or bodies of work and SWIFT, a likely outgrowth is *collaborative* work among ad hoc teams focused on related work and shared outcomes. Ad-hoc State Teams with cross-organizational membership come together as needed to accomplish tasks established by the State Leadership and Implementation Teams.

Examples of Ad-hoc Teams include: SEA and National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) supporting the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP); SEA and Regional Comprehensive Center staff supporting the state's Educator Equity Plan; SEA staff assigned to Focus/Priority School TA or School Effectiveness and who may utilize Indistar and/or other TA tools sanctioned by the state; or SEA staff working with districts and schools to implement MTSS for academic and behavioral needs.

District Implementation Team

The district is the primary point of intervention for SWIFT TA. As such, its membership is critical to demonstrate to school partners the district's investment in implementing and sustaining equity-based inclusive reform. District Implementation Teams lead and support implementation and sustainability of SWIFT Domains and Features utilizing the SWIFT TA practices to enable them to sustain and scale up implementation across the district. They also share data from the District with the State Implementation Team to inform statewide strategy and supports. District Implementation

Teams meet at least monthly, and often bi-weekly, to ensure ongoing engagement in the communication cycle.

Recommended team members include a district leader with decision-making authority, LEA coordinator, Principals and School Coaches, Curriculum and Instruction leader, Special Education lead administrator, Family and Community representatives, Human Resources, Title I, Finance, and Early Childhood representatives.

School Transformation Team

With the school as the primary place of transformation, a School Transformation Team holds chief responsibility for implementing the SWIFT framework and improving student outcomes. Transformation Teams collect and review useable data about implementation successes and challenges to share with district and state teams. These shared data support ongoing collaboration to develop and provide the TA supports and infrastructure changes needed to support their school-based transformative work.

The specific purposes of School Transformation Team meetings are to lead and support implementation and sustainability of SWIFT Domains and Features by utilizing the SWIFT TA practices to enable sustained implementation within the school. School Transformation Team members engage in communication with the District Implementation Team member(s) about implementation successes and challenges (using quantitative and qualitative data) to inform their strategies for building districtwide capacity. Minimally, School Transformation Teams meet monthly and perhaps with greater frequency to utilize the SWIFT TA practices, and move the school forward in implementation. Often a School Transformation Team is synonymous with a School Leadership Team.

Recommended team members include Principal and/or Assistant Principal, School Coach, General and Special Education representatives, Family and Community representatives, Behavior, Title I, English Language learning, and Early Childhood education representatives.

Refer to Appendix A for a table listing State, District, and School Teams' purposes, recommended membership, and meeting frequency.

Learning Together, Innovating Together

SWIFT TA is designed to support the distinct needs and roles related to building SWIFT implementation capacity within schools, districts, and SEAs. Its collaborative, cross-system learning design promotes whole system movement toward equity-based inclusion. The following overviews components of SWIFT TA in relation to the SEA. The State Launch, Professional Learning Institutes, and the National Learning Consortium reviews are followed by brief descriptions of the related practices and how positive outcomes are shared.

SWIFT State Launch

The State Launch occurs within the first year of a TA partnership. This event provides an important opportunity for cross-system teams to coalesce and begin their journey toward full implementation. SWIFT personnel hold the primary responsibility for designing and implementing the event in partnership with SEA Coordinators and identified members of the State Leadership Team, including district and school representatives.

Who Should Attend State Launch

Participants at the State Launch include representatives from State, District, and School Teams and other essential stakeholders such as family, community, and higher education partners. The major criterion for selection is to include those individuals and groups that have a key stake in successful SWIFT implementation.

State Launch Objectives

The objectives of the State Launch are twofold: (a) participants to explore the topics listed below, and (b) build a strong relationship foundation for future work together.

- The Why, What, and How of SWIFT implementation
- The Why, What, and How of SWIFT TA
- A shared understanding of the research underpinning SWIFT and a schoolwide approach to inclusion
- SWIFT as an organizing framework for existing goals and work

- The alignment among SWIFT’s purpose and values and participants’ current work
- The system’s current strengths and opportunities to explore SWIFT’s framework as a vehicle for transformation
- How SWIFT Domains and Features work in current partner schools
- The identification of a SWIFT learning community

This launch provides a platform from which the State Leadership Team, their SWIFT partners, and identified stakeholders establish their collective Vision for their SWIFT implementation partnership. The Visioning practice and other SWIFT TA practices are described in subsequent sections of this blueprint.

Professional Learning Institute

Professional Learning Institutes (PLI) are held minimally once per year throughout the duration of SWIFT’s partnership with a state. The PLI in Year 1 is its own forum to support the SWIFT learning community and create a shared understanding of the SWIFT Domains and Features. Further detail is provided below.

The content of future PLIs is based on the implementation needs of SEAs, districts, and schools discovered through the use of SWIFT TA practices, tools, and assessments. These PLIs can be incorporated into other learning forums (e.g., annual educator institutes or conferences) that utilize existing, state-based resources (e.g., people, knowledge banks). The goal of each subsequent PLI is to deepen participants’ skills, knowledge, and competencies to implement SWIFT and their expertise in leading the changes they envision.

Who Should Attend

The PLI is specifically designed to build the skills, competencies, knowledge, and expert leadership for change that are essential for implementing the SWIFT framework. As such, attendees include state, district, and school team members and key stakeholders, including, but not limited to, family, community, and higher education partners.

Year One PLI Objectives

Suggested objectives for this cross-system, collaborative learning opportunity are listed below. When planning for the PLI, SWIFT TA providers collaborate with state, district, and local partners to customize objectives for a state's context and need.

- Create a shared definition of equity-based inclusion
- Create a shared understanding of the SWIFT Domains and Features
- Create a shared understanding of the SWIFT TA practices, including the stages of implementation
- Strengthen and expand the SWIFT learning community

National Leadership Consortium

SWIFT Center National Leadership Consortium (NLC) represents leaders and stakeholders from across the country who are committed to equity-based inclusive education. The NLC meets in person twice annually, and monthly by phone. These meetings are another example of SWIFT Center's commitment to co-creating capacity for SWIFT implementation by bringing its partners and stakeholders together to share their experiences and expertise in ways that enhance continuous improvement.

Who Attends the NLC

To date, SWIFT NLC attendees have included:

- SEA Coordinators (state personnel)
- OSEP Project Officers
- SWIFT Center Co-Directors
- SWIFT Center Advisory Board
- SWIFT SEA Facilitators and LEA Facilitators
- SWIFT Teams, including:
 - Capacity and Sustainability (e.g., representation from the Council of Chief State School Officers, National Association for State Directors of Special Education)
 - Family and Community
 - Communication and Dissemination
 - Product Development
 - Evaluation
 - Policy

NLC Objectives

The NLC in-person and phone meetings have four major objectives:

1. To share information on SWIFT implementation progress and successes in partner states and national knowledge dissemination efforts
2. To build competency in using SWIFT TA Practices, tools, assessments, and resources in the process of implementation, sustainability, and scale-up
3. To engage in continuous improvement using data from implementation experiences and the collective expertise of all members
4. To increase expert collective leadership for transformation

Similar to the previously described State Launch and the PLI, the NLC fosters cross-system learning and innovation and strengthens a *nationwide* partnership for equity-based inclusive education.

Visioning

SWIFT TA encourages State Leadership Teams and stakeholders to expand on the State Launch conversations through the practice of Visioning. The primary intent of this practice is to create a shared picture of SWIFT implementation, that is, what the system will look like when the framework is fully implemented. SEA and LEA Facilitators share responsibility with the SEA Coordinator(s) to facilitate the state level Visioning practice. Generally, a representative group of stakeholders from throughout the system are involved to ensure all viewpoints are heard.³

The Visioning practice answers four major questions:

1. What does the future look like when SWIFT Domains and Features are fully implemented and equity-based inclusive education is the current reality within the state?
2. What are the SEA's current strengths for implementing equity-based inclusion?
3. What opportunities might the SEA act on in the present to achieve its aspirations?

³ Creating a state vision for SWIFT fully implemented can be accomplished by utilizing different tools including those outside of identified SWIFT TA practice of Visioning. Determining which tool or practice would best serve this purpose is a collaborative decision to be made by the State Leadership Team.

4. What are the SEA's measures for success?

Through the process of answering these questions, the State Leadership Team identifies a vision for how to move forward through their work. This process prepares them for the State Data Snapshot and Priority and Practice Planning work that is described in full later.

SEA and LEA Facilitators share responsibility with the SEA Coordinator(s) to facilitate the Visioning practice. Generally, a representative group of stakeholders from throughout the system participate in this practice to enable whole system learning and innovation.

State Data Snapshots and Priority & Practice Planning

As one of the SWIFT six TA practices (McCart et al., 2016), Data Snapshots assist schools, districts, and states in making data-based decisions when selecting priorities for SWIFT implementation and capacity building in the short and long term. Multiple data points are reflected on a Data Snapshot Form, and discussed in a facilitated process. Data Snapshot Guides and Forms are available in the [SWIFT Playbook \(swiftschools.org/playbook\)](https://swiftschools.org/playbook).

The State Leadership Team engages in a State Data Snapshot practice annually (or more often, if needed) to link the priorities, existing resources, student outcomes, implementation capacity data, and other information gleaned from their partnering schools' and districts' Data Snapshots. The State Leadership Team adds to these data the information they obtained from completing a *State Capacity Assessment*, as described below. Combined, these data help inform the State Teams' dialogue and deliberation regarding the development of strategic SEA priorities and actions. The TA practice of Resource Mapping and Matching is simultaneously carried out to identify who and/or what is available within the state, region, or nationally to support implementation plans. Priorities selected when reviewing Data Snapshots and Resource Leveraging Maps feed into the stage-based action planning referred to as Priority and Practice Planning (McCart et al., 2016).

State Capacity Assessment

SWIFT TA uses the State Implementation and Scaling Up of Evidence Based Practices Center (SISEP) *State Capacity Assessment* (SCA; Fixsen, Duda,

Horner, & Blase, 2014) as a formal tool to assist state partners' reflections on their current capacity to support and sustain SWIFT-related evidence-based practices. The SISEP and SWIFT Centers collaborated to adapt the SCA's language to better align with key terms used by SWIFT state partners.

A State Leadership Team generally completes an SCA early on in a SWIFT TA partnership. This activity contributes to a shared understanding of the capacity measures used in Data Snapshots, and establishes a state's capacity baseline. Thereafter, the State Leadership Team completes the assessment annually.

As a part of an SCA, an SEA Facilitator guides the State Leadership Team to focus attention on their infrastructure and communications that will be critical to the sustainability and scale-up of SWIFT Domains and Features. Also, as the state progresses through Years 1 and 2 of the TA partnership, the SCA data are integral to the body of evidence reviewed in the State Data Snapshots, as described above.

Resource Leveraging Mapping

Strengths documented in the state's Visioning practice are the foundation of the SEA's Resource Leveraging Map (RLM) for SWIFT transformation. District and School Teams conduct similar mapping of their own resources.

Across the system, the RLM is a "live tool" that is developed and then modified throughout implementation. SWIFT supports its partners as they continually scan for local, district, state, regional, and national resources that match priority goals identified for the implementation of SWIFT's Domains and Features. The RLM is a mechanism for supporting SEAs as they work to become coherent, de-siloed systems. Further, a RLM can help SEAs focus on educational initiatives and resources already available to support LEA transformation. With increased capacity made possible by differentiated state level technical assistance, LEAs, in turn, can provide support to schools to implement evidence-based strategies grounded in the SWIFT framework.

Communicating Positive Outcomes

For anyone involved in a change endeavor it is encouraging to experience positive outcomes. As teams across the system make progress in SWIFT

implementation, State Teams can identify and make visible the positive student, family, community, and staff outcomes they observe throughout the system. Positive communication supports whole system capacity building by advancing understanding of SWIFT, expanding the SWIFT learning community, and increasing optimism and hope for the outcomes that the state aspires to for students, families, and their school communities.

Positive outcomes become more easily identified as State, District, and School Teams become adept in using the tools and practices available for establishing short term priority goals (e.g., Data Snapshots) and setting performance measures for accountability that can be referenced to identify progress.

For current SWIFT partners, multiple structures are used to share statewide SWIFT implementation progress and shine a light on what is working. Examples include annual statewide educator institutes, statewide information sharing networks, professional learning forums sponsored within and outside the state, Superintendent and Principal networks, SWIFT monthly newsletter that spotlights a different state in each issue, and the [SWIFT Partners](#) page at swiftschools.org, where blogs and podcasts contributed by individuals from the state are shared.

Systematically sharing positive outcomes can also attract additional schools and districts to become members of a state's SWIFT learning community, either informally or formally, as scale-up sites.

Sustaining and Scaling Up SWIFT

States and districts who partner with SWIFT share a commitment to scaling up the framework to additional districts and schools, timed in accordance with State and/or District Teams demonstrating that implementation efforts are producing desired outcomes for students and families; and SEA and/or districts demonstrating sufficient capacity to be the source of technical support, via SWIFT TA practices, to a growing SWIFT community. The scale-up process, in effect, becomes a demonstration of the capacity built within the SEA and districts during the first few years of the SWIFT TA partnership.

Assessing State Readiness

Scaling up equity-based inclusive education within a state is predicated on the assumption that certain benchmarks are met that indicate the SEA is well prepared to involve more districts and schools. Table 2 lists multiple indicators State Teams can use when assessing their readiness to be the source of technical and capacity building support for new SWIFT implementation sites. State level teams may have additional markers that are seen as essential for scale up.

Planning for Scale Up

In their scale-up planning process, SEA Coordinator(s), in conjunction with State Teams, address the following topics:

- District and school selection criteria and process
- Infrastructure necessary for SWIFT in additional districts/schools (e.g., funding supports, identification and training of SWIFT-FIT assessors, data management and accountability system). States may choose to integrate existing structures (e.g., MTSS/PBIS sites, SSIP sites) when making these decisions
- Orientation of new sites to SWIFT TA Practices
- Differentiated TA provision to all sites and a calendar for joint meetings
- Learning forum/structure that brings together new and current SWIFT partners and stakeholders to build collaborative relationships and co-construct a network for mutual support and information sharing

Table 2

SEA Readiness Rubric for SWIFT Scale Up in Districts and Schools

Indicator	Not in place	Partially in place	Fully in place
1. State Leadership and Implementation Teams actively engage in supporting SWIFT implementation in the state.			
2. SEA Coordinators co-lead or lead state and district SWIFT implementation efforts.			
3. SEA staff across all divisions and/or departments are aware of SWIFT implementation in districts and schools and its relationship to the SEA vision and strategic priorities for change.			
4. SEA staff and any external TA providers whose work functions directly relate to SWIFT implementation are engaged as regular or ad hoc members on State Teams.			
5. SWIFT “visibility” within the state is promoted using new or existing structures for communication and media.			
6. State Teams effectively use quantitative and qualitative data emerging from SWIFT district and school implementation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Differentiate SEA supports to districts and schools b. Communicate with other districts and schools about SWIFT implementation successes and the useable knowledge that emerges from current implementation. 			
7. SEA Resource Leveraging Map is a “live” tool, consistently updated and reviewed by State Teams to reflect new resources that can be leveraged to support SWIFT implementation			

Expanding Circles of SWIFT Stakeholder Engagement

An increase in the number of districts and schools joining the SWIFT learning community broadens the base of support for the state’s vision of equity-based inclusive education. An expanded SWIFT stakeholder community increases a state’s capacity for new knowledge, skills, and competencies for implementing the SWIFT framework. It also increases the state’s innovative capacity with increasing numbers of leaders equipped to effectively lead change through SWIFT TA practices.

Expanding circles of SWIFT stakeholder engagement may also cultivate public learning and value for the results achieved in SWIFT implementation. Support for SWIFT can be increased as state and local partners communicate success data “outwardly” to state policy makers, government representatives, statewide business community, and so on.

Sustaining Change through Practice-Policy Communication Cycles

Many SWIFT stakeholders see the Inclusive Policy Structure and Practice domain as unique. A conscious TA emphasis on policy analysis, as it relates to inhibiting or enabling SWIFT implementation, is viewed as integral to sustainability of outcomes.

Stakeholder dialogues on practice-policy issues that surface in SWIFT implementation take place in Leadership Team meetings across the system. The ultimate goal of these conversations is to elevate understanding of policy enablers to SWIFT implementation and sustainability—and to take actions that eliminate or mitigate the impact of policies that may inhibit implementation. The practice-policy communication cycle depicted in Figure 5 was developed by the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and is used in SWIFT TA with State and District Teams.

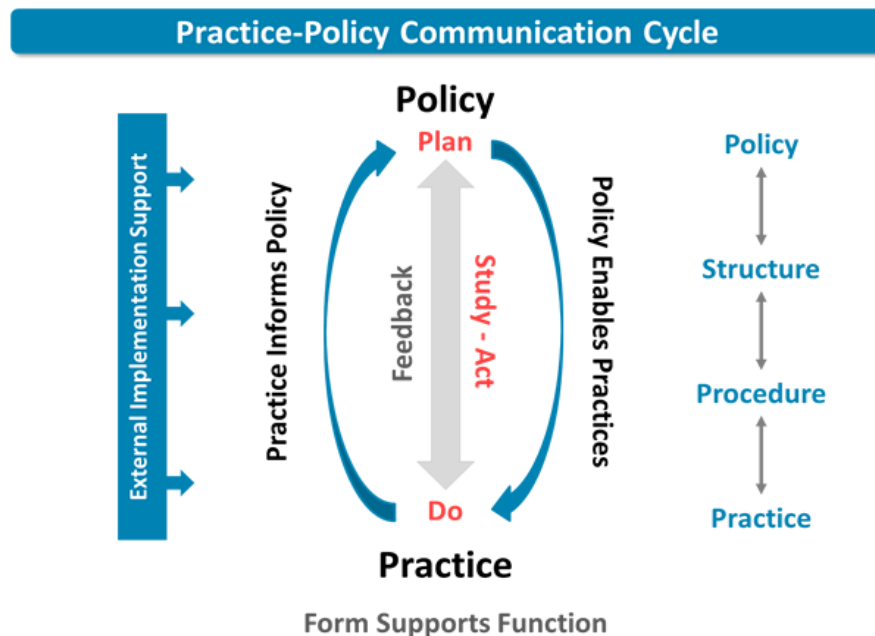


Figure 5. Policy-Practice Communication Cycle. (Active Implementation Frameworks, National Implementation Research Network <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation>)

Additional policy-related papers and briefs helpful to supporting implementation of the SWIFT Domain of Inclusive Policy Structure and Practice are available on the [SWIFT Shelf \(swiftschools.org/shelf\)](https://swiftschools.org/shelf).

Conclusion

States, districts, and schools cannot achieve the equity-based inclusive education they seek using the same structures that led to the educational inequities too many students currently experience. New structures and processes are needed. SWIFT Center guiding premises, TA practices, and Domains and Features grow out of research and experience that SEA personnel can use to inform their shared work toward that vision.

This document serves as a blueprint for SEA personnel entering a SWIFT TA partnership for implementing statewide equity-based inclusive education. Through the SEA's primary role as the architect of state infrastructure and processes, this TA partnership enables equity-based inclusive educational reform to become a reality within the state's public education system.

We trust that this blueprint makes clear the cross-system relationship building, collaborative learning, and innovation required for SWIFT implementation. Each SWIFT state, local, and school partner has its own sociopolitical and financial complexities, as well as diverse groups of stakeholders whose engagement is essential to create and sustain change. We are buoyed by the commitment and successes achieved by our current partners in doing this work. We have deep appreciation for their leadership in managing the tensions created by disparate and legitimate concerns and aspirations of those within the co-creating implementation environment. The compelling image of every child within the community receiving the support needed to achieve positive academic, behavioral, and social outcomes is the motivation and inspiration we see in them to collectively stay the course.

As stated at the beginning of this document, SWIFT Center holds that we, as TA providers, share full responsibility with our SEA, district, and school partners—educators, families, community members, and all SWIFT stakeholders—to accomplish our shared aims. We are confident that we are better together.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Cross-system Transformation Teaming

Appendix B – SWIFT Tools and Assessments

Appendix A – Cross-system Transformation Teaming

State Leadership Team	
Purposes	Recommended Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess SEA capacity to implement SWIFT framework across districts and schools Learn and dialogue about implementation progress in partner sites using system and stakeholder data Conduct policy analyses, alignment, and planning to enable and sustain SWIFT evidence-based practices Identify cross-system work that can advance implementation Use State Data Snapshots to establish goals and priorities for state level work, including identifying and acting on the state level infrastructure changes needed to support SWIFT implementation and sustainability Plan for and achieve successful scale-up of SWIFT in additional districts and schools Build a SWIFT learning community throughout the state; messaging about available SWIFT resources, implementation successes, and cross-system learning opportunities for individuals and teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Education Leader (e.g., Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent) Curriculum/Instruction lead administrator State Director for Special Education Title I lead administrator SWIFT Implementation Team members SWIFT SEA Coordinator(s) SWIFT LEA Coordinators SWIFT School Coaches Leaders of work related to SWIFT not already represented on State Implementation Team (e.g., Human Resources, Performance Management/Data, Finance, Early Childhood) SWIFT essential stakeholders (as defined in each state) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family and Community Representatives Mental Health Higher Education Professional Associations Legislators Union representatives
Recommended Frequency: Twice annually; additional meetings as determined by team tasks or changes in state context (e.g., new laws or regulations)	

State Implementation Team	
Purposes	Recommended Team Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the use of and fidelity to the SWIFT TA Practices to implement the SWIFT framework in districts and schools • Utilize SWIFT to align current state initiatives or bodies of work and create whole system coherence of reform efforts (e.g., Title I and Title IIA) • Map and leverage regional, state, local and national resources to support SWIFT implementation • Contribute to the differentiated TA support to District Implementation and School Transformation Teams • Develop plans to communicate SWIFT implementation progress across the system and disseminate SWIFT Center resources for equity-based inclusive education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Superintendent(s) • SWIFT SEA Coordinator • Representatives of critical reform efforts or bodies of work within the state (e.g., Title I, Title IIA, Title III, Special Education, MTSS, PBIS, Educator Effectiveness, State Personnel Preparation or Development Grants) • Family and Community representatives • Higher Education/personnel preparation representative(s) • LEA Coordinators
Recommended Frequency: Monthly	

Ad Hoc Teams	
Purposes	Recommended Team Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To accomplish tasks established by State Leadership/Implementation Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-organizational membership
Recommended Frequency: As needed	

District Implementation Team	
Purposes	Recommended Team Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and support implementation and sustainability of SWIFT using the SWIFT TA Practices in its schools • Sustain and scale up SWIFT implementation across the district • Engage in the communication cycle among teams. Specifically, share data from the District with State Implementation Teams to inform statewide strategy and supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent • LEA Coordinator • Curriculum/Instruction leader • Special Education lead administrator • Principals and SWIFT School Coaches from each school • Family and Community • Human Resources, Title I, Finance, and Early Childhood representatives
Recommended Frequency: Monthly	

School Transformation Team	
Purposes	Recommended Team Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and support implementation and sustainability of SWIFT within the school, utilizing the SWIFT TA Practices • Sustain and scale up SWIFT implementation across school classrooms. • Engage in communication among teams. Specifically, share with the District Implementation Team member(s) about implementation successes and challenges (using quantitative and qualitative data) to inform their strategies for building districtwide capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal/Assistant Principal • SWIFT School Coach • General and Special Education representatives • Family and Community representatives • Behavior representative • Title I, English Language Learning, and Early Childhood representatives
Recommended Frequency: Monthly or more, as needed	

Appendix B – SWIFT Assessments and Tools

- [SWIFT Fidelity of Integrity Assessment \(SWIFT-FIA\)](https://swiftschools.org/shelf)
(swiftschools.org/shelf)
- [State, District, and School Data Snapshot Forms and Facilitator Guidance](https://swiftschools.org/playbook) (swiftschools.org/playbook)